



T E C H N I C A L B R I E F

The ORD Red (Emergency Advisory) Team

Under the National Strategy for Homeland Security and various federal response plans, EPA has specific response and recovery responsibilities. The National Homeland Security Research Center (NHSRC), which is part of the Office of Research and Development (ORD), is helping to meet this responsibility through the establishment of an Emergency Advisory Team, referred to as the "Red Team."

Background

Bombings and hijackings are dramatic terrorist events, but chemical, biological, or radiological agents can inflict greater damage on a community's well-being. Many different substances and delivery methods can be used, and the level of public alarm is always high for these unconventional weapons of mass destruction.

Incidents involving such threat agents pose unique hazards and challenges. NHSRC has assembled a team of experts to help deal with events that threaten homeland security. In case of a threat, the Red Team will be called upon to provide scientific guidance to senior management in ORD.



Team Composition and Training

Red Team members represent 12 primary disciplines throughout ORD; each member brings a special expertise to the team. In addition, members receive special training from NHSRC, with support from the U.S. Army's Edgewood Chemical Biological Center. The Red Team's training covers emergency response protocols, hazardous materials, specific threat scenarios, and familiarity with relevant research projects.

NHSRC's Response Capability Enhancement (RCE) program coordinates the Red Team's operation and periodic training. The training events involve simulated security threats designed to assess the Red Team's abilities and how their roles and responsibilities play out. Depending on the nature of an emergency, different members of the team may be called to assist.

The training events also test how well the available tools—such as EPA's Continuity of Operations Tools or Chemical and Biological Helpline databases—would enable the Red Team to provide scientific support for the response to a chemical, biological, radiological, or explosive incident within the United States.

Response protocols, facility use, and airflow models are among the areas explored at the training events. In addition, the specialized data generated by the exercises enhance RCE's ability to plan for emergency responses.

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Operation

In the case of a homeland security event, the Red Team will be called into service by the EPA Emergency Operation Center (EOC) or NHSRC under the direction of the ORD Assistant Administrator. Team members will move, if requested, to designated locations. Members are equipped with emergency communication devices—cell phones and a Government Emergency Telecommunications Service calling card—and laptop computers.

From their designated locations, the team experts can communicate with the EOC or NHSRC and contribute their individual strengths as appropriate. Any management or technical assistance needed, such as setting up help lines and emergency response systems, will be provided by RCE. RCE also maintains a registry of homeland security experts who can be called on for assistance if needed.

For more information, visit the NHSRC Web site at www.epa.gov/nhsrc.

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